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General Assembly

Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

80th plenary meeting
Monday, 9 February 2004, 3 p.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Earthquake in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The President: I should like, on behalf of all members of the General Assembly, to extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the tragic loss of life, serious injuries and extensive material damage that have resulted from the recent earthquake. May I also express the hope that the international community will show its solidarity and respond promptly and generously to any request for help.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, allow me to express, on behalf of the people and the Government of Iran, our profound gratitude for your words of sympathy and condolence here and for the message of condolence that you have already addressed to President Khatami in the wake of the deaths and devastation caused by the earthquake that struck the city of Bam. Although my country is located in an earthquake-prone area and so many fault lines cross Iranian territory, the devastation caused by the Bam earthquake was unprecedented in living memory. It led to the loss of more than 40,000 precious lives and to the destruction of tens of thousands of families, rendering thousands of children orphans and widowing thousands of women.

The attention that you, Mr. President, have devoted to the calamity visited upon the inhabitants of Bam and the sympathy and concern of the international community at large have been overwhelming indeed. So many countries rushed to the site and to the aid of the earthquake victims, and dozens of cargo planes flew in with emergency supplies. The Iranian agencies involved in that colossal relief effort highly value the support that they have received from foreign public and private institutions. More important, that support also provides an invaluable source of comfort and solace to the grieving earthquake survivors and to the whole Iranian people as they note that the outside world shares in their sorrow.

Allow me to conclude by also expressing my sincere thanks and appreciation to all Governments, through their representatives in this Hall, for the words of sympathy that they have expressed as well as for the relief assistance and support that they have provided to the victims of this tragedy. The tragic earthquake in Bam, which has caused immense human suffering, has also brought to the surface the best of human compassion and solidarity, transcending national and political divides. The people and the Government of Iran, recognizing their tremendous responsibility to rebuild the ancient city of Bam, will always remember the common humanity that has bonded us together during these difficult times.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Jaime de Piniés, President of the fortieth session of the General Assembly

The President: It is my sad duty to inform members of the General Assembly of the death on Monday, 29 December 2003, of His Excellency

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Mr. Jaime de Piniés of Spain, former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Jaime de Piniés had a long and distinguished career as a prominent diplomat of his country, having served in various capacities, notably as the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations for 17 years.

As President of the fortieth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Jaime de Piniés played a prominent role in the Organization and made a major contribution towards the achievement of the objectives set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I should like to convey our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Spain and to the bereaved family of Mr. De Piniés.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Jaime de Piniés, former President of the General Assembly.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan, who will speak on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the African Group, I would like to address the Assembly today to join in the expression of sorrow following the passing of Mr. Jaime de Piniés, a man familiar to the United Nations for many years.

He held many posts in his diplomatic career. The United Nations recognizes his wealth of contributions throughout his quarter century at the United Nations. He represented his country for many years as the Permanent Representative of Spain. His career culminated in his election as President of the fortieth session of the General Assembly.

At this sad time, we convey to the country and the people of Spain and to his family our most sincere condolences. May God have mercy upon him.

The President: I call on the representative of Nepal, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): The passing away of Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, former President of the General Assembly, has profoundly saddened us all. With Ambassador De Piniés' death, Spain has lost an illustrious son and a brilliant diplomat. We at the United Nations have lost an outstanding member of our family, and the world has lost a great humanist.

Ambassador De Piniés was at the helm of the General Assembly at a very difficult time. The bipolar world had begun to fray at the seams, with the attendant tumult. The United Nations remained a battleground for the divided world of that day. A slight slip could have sent the world Organization tumbling down a precipice and into a quagmire. With his wisdom and skill, Ambassador De Piniés deftly navigated the fortieth session of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion and earned wide appreciation. A consummate career diplomat, Ambassador De Piniés joined the ranks of those very few presidents of the General Assembly who have made a difference and rendered commendable service to the United Nations and the world at large.

That he represented Spain at the United Nations for more than 25 years, including 17 years as Permanent Representative, bears eloquent testimony to his dedication and commitment to the causes the United Nations stands to promote. Indeed, his work for and contribution to the United Nations were exemplary.

Ambassador De Piniés is no longer with us. His death is an irreparable loss to Spain, the United Nations and the world. On behalf of the Asian Group, I extend our deepest condolences and sympathies to the Government and the people of Spain and to the bereaved family of Ambassador De Piniés in this hour of agony and distress.

Ambassador De Piniés will no longer physically be with us, but he will continue to inspire us to dedicate ourselves to working for the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Ambassador De Piniés will continue to live in our thoughts and in our minds.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Ecuador, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States on the occasion of the well deserved tribute we are paying today to the distinguished Spanish diplomat, Mr. Jaime de Piniés. His long and brilliant career in

Spain's foreign service as representative of his country to Cuba, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Philippines and the United Nations demonstrated his personal qualities and great diplomatic skill and experience.

Of particular note is his record of 16 years in the United Nations, where he served as President of the General Assembly and of the Security Council. In all the work he undertook in the Organization, he demonstrated his firm commitment to multilateralism and to the lofty and imperishable goals of the Organization.

The fortieth session of the General Assembly, over which he presided, was a very important year for the Organization. On that occasion, the international community unanimously reaffirmed the validity of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, created primarily to maintain international peace and security. As we have seen, the Organization has had to adapt itself to emerging problems and to face new challenges that require reform. The example set by Ambassador Jaime de Piniés of hard work and dedication to the goals of the United Nations are everlasting legacies on his part which will remain forever within this Organization.

I should like, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, to convey our sorrow to the Kingdom of Spain and to the Ambassador's family at the very sad loss they have suffered.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Ireland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Ms. Murnaghan (Ireland): On behalf of the Western European and Other States Group, I have the honour to speak in tribute to Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, who passed away recently.

Ambassador De Piniés had a long career in diplomacy, in the course of which he came to know the United Nations intimately, having served at the Spanish Permanent Mission to the United Nations on four occasions, twice as Ambassador and Permanent Representative. In all, he represented his country at 28 sessions of the General Assembly and served as President of the Security Council on two occasions during Spain's tenure on the Council.

His long association with the United Nations culminated in his election to the presidency of the fortieth session of the General Assembly, in 1985-1986, during which he also chaired the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly on the critical economic situation in Africa.

During the course of his long career as a diplomat, he also served as Spanish Ambassador to the United Kingdom, the Philippines, Cuba and the United States.

Following his retirement, he continued contributing to the cause of international diplomacy through seminars and personal contacts. I wish to offer the heartfelt condolences of my Group to the Government and the people of Spain and to Ambassador De Piniés' family, friends and colleagues.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States, the host country.

Mr. Siv (United States of America): On behalf of the United States as host country, I wish to extend our deep condolences to the Government, the delegation and the people of Spain on the passing of Ambassador Jaime de Piniés late last year.

Ambassador Jaime de Piniés represented Spain at the United Nations before his election as President of the General Assembly in 1985. During his tenure, the United Nations celebrated its fortieth anniversary, with the theme "United Nations for a better world". Ambassador Piniés was also President of the Security Council on two occasions.

Ambassador Piniés served the Organization with distinction and dedication, as his nearly-30-year career in New York clearly demonstrated. He strongly endorsed multilateralism and worked to enhance the visibility of the United Nations on the world stage.

Twenty years ago, speaking to this plenary, he addressed members with a challenge that remains to this day: the United Nations does no more or no less than its members want it to do.

I wish to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to honour a global diplomat whose contributions through the United Nations will be missed by all. Ambassador De Piniés' family members have our greatest sympathy.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by expressing my profound appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the very gracious gesture of wishing to pay tribute to the memory of my colleague and compatriot, Ambassador Jaime de Piniés.

I met Ambassador De Piniés — probably the most popular and best-known Spanish diplomat of the last 50 years — around the time of my wedding. For many complicated reasons, he was attending my wedding here in New York as Ambassador to the United Nations. At the ceremony, everyone, myself included, was impressed by his sympathetic nature, his naturalness and his elegance.

Somewhat later I worked with him — he as the Permanent Representative of my country, and I in leading posts at the Spanish Foreign Ministry — and throughout those years we had close contact. I was also very much impressed by his knowledge of the issues, his professionalism and his tact. But what has always remained with me as my impression of the Ambassador — what had the greatest impact on me — was his deep and intense love of the United Nations.

Ambassador De Piniés came to the United Nations in 1956, and he stayed until 1984-1985, when he retired. Throughout those years, he was never disillusioned by the United Nations. He always showed tremendous faith in its purposes, and, as I said, an intense and profound love of the Organization.

Ambassador Piniés, were he still among us, would be very interested in the question of the master plan, in the situation in the Middle East, in the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and in the situation in Iraq. Indeed, he was someone who believed in and loved the Organization and who devoted a part of his life to the pursuit of its ideals — that is to say, promoting the well-being of the human race and working towards international peace and security.

May he rest in peace, and, once again, I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly and all of those who took the floor.

Agenda item 124 ***(continued)***

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/58/688 and Add.1)

The President: I should now like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/58/688, and to addendum 1 thereto, containing two letters from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly.

In document A/58/688, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that 26 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

May I remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

In document A/58/688/Add.1, the Secretary-General informs the Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/58/688, Antigua and Barbuda has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in documents A/58/688 and A/58/688/Add.1?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 ***(continued)***

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 19

> **Note verbale dated 19 January 2004 from the Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/58/692)**

The President: In order for the General Assembly to take action on the request contained in document A/58/692, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 19, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 19?

It was so decided.

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly decided to consider agenda item 19 directly in plenary meeting.

In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the document, may I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 19?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 19 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Note verbale dated 19 January 2004 from the Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/58/692)

The President: By its note verbale, the Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations advises me of the interest of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in becoming a member of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

As delegations are aware, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1654 (XVI) of 27 November 1961, members of the Special Committee are nominated by the President of the General Assembly.

After consultations with regional groups, I have nominated Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as a member of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

May I take it that the Assembly takes note of this nomination?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 19?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 20

Draft resolution (A/58/L.57)

The President: As indicated in the footnote to document A/58/L.57, in order for the General Assembly to take action on the draft resolution, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 20.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The President: Members will recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly decided to consider agenda item 20 directly in plenary meeting.

In order for the General Assembly to take action expeditiously on the draft resolution, may I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 20?

It was so decided

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Draft resolution (A/58/L.57)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Qatar to introduce draft resolution A/58/L.57.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to extend my condolences to Iran for those who fell victim to the earthquake in Bam.

I also wish, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to join those who have spoken in condolence to the Government of Spain and to the family of Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, former President of the General Assembly. May his soul rest in peace.

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, our sincerest wishes and congratulations on the occasion of the new year, wishing you and the members of the Bureau the best of health, happiness and prosperity.

On this occasion, I have the honour and privilege to submit to the members of the General Assembly, in the context of its fifty-eighth session and under agenda items 8 and 20, a draft resolution contained in document A/58/L.57, dated 3 February 2004, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The draft resolution is almost identical to that which was adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session under agenda item 35 in 2001. The only change introduced in the draft resolution before the Assembly today is confined to some specific points required by the new draft.

We are submitting this draft resolution in view of the conviction of my Government of the importance of strengthening the role of democracy and consolidating it in the lives of peoples, and that democracy today has become a basic tenet of good governance in any civil society. Sound social development and security require the promotion of the participation of citizens in choosing those who represent them in the administration of society. In that respect and by way of enhancing this role, my Government is building modernized civil institutions in accordance with the recognized universal standards. Also emanating from this conviction, a national constitution was recently adopted in my country. It specifies and clearly defines the role of the three branches of Government, the legislative, the executive and the judicial, which provides for the establishment of an elected national Parliament.

Hence, in order to provide support by the United Nations for the efforts made by Governments to strengthen and consolidate new or restored democracies, my delegation would greatly appreciate the adoption by the Assembly of the draft resolution before it.

By paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, the Assembly would welcome the proposal of the Government of Qatar to hold the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies from 13 to 15 November 2006 in Doha.

The following countries have joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution: Afghanistan, Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Iceland, India, Madagascar, Oman, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

In conclusion, allow me to express my gratitude to the Member States that sponsored this draft resolution and my utmost respect and appreciation to all members of the General Assembly.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.57, entitled "Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, to be held in Doha in 2006".

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of A/58/L.57: Djibouti, Egypt, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, the Republic of Moldova and the Sudan.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.57?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/281).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 41 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

Draft resolution (A/58/L.58)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at its 39th and 40th plenary meetings, on 21 and 22 October 2003. In connection with this item, the General Assembly had before it a draft resolution contained in document A/58/L.58.

The draft resolution the Assembly now has before it is to advance follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on children. When world leaders convened at New York for that special session in May 2002, they committed themselves to a time-bound set of specific goals for children and young people and to a basic framework for getting there. Earlier, heads of State or Government had pledged, in their Millennium Declaration, to take specific action to improve the lives

of the world's people. The Millennium Development Goals emanating from the Declaration, the Convention on the Rights. of the Child — the most universally ratified human rights treaty — and its optional protocols, together with the outcome document of the special session, "A World Fit for Children", constitute an essential framework for improving the lives of children and young people throughout the world.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/58/333) which we have considered in our discussion of agenda item 41 and in consultations on this draft resolution takes note of progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and Plan of Action of the special session by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

The adoption of the draft resolution will take us all a step forward in keeping the promises those world leaders made, and in implementing the agenda they set themselves to better the lives of children and young people. Among its provisions, the draft resolution calls for the convening of a commemorative plenary meeting in 2007, on a date to be decided at the sixtieth session of the Assembly, and invites the President of the General Assembly to finalize organizational matters in consultation with Member States. This, I believe, is important for ensuring that we remain focused and take appropriate action at all levels to keep the promises we have made.

I hope the draft resolution will meet with the support, and approval by consensus of all delegations.

I wish to take this opportunity, on my own account and on behalf of the General Assembly, to thank Ambassador Staehelin of Switzerland for undertaking the task of holding consultations and successfully concluding the negotiations on the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.58.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.58?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/282).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Ms. Tamlyn (United States of America): We welcome the resolution on follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children and thank the Swiss delegation for its efforts.

This year, the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, we would like to underscore the importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work with children, especially NGOs that work with their families. These NGOs that work for and with families have a vital role to play in assisting Member States to implement the commitments made at the special session on children and at other relevant major United Nations conferences and summits.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 41?

It was so decided.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.50 p.m.